

TIPS FOR USING PHYSICAL SIMULATIONS

Physical simulations are especially good to use for experiential learners. Students who like to be physically active enjoy the movement and challenges of physical simulations. The simulation scenarios provided in this curriculum are based on stories from farmers with these disabilities. A brief story about a farmer with the disability is included with each unit.

Students generally think it is fun to accept the disability challenge. It is important that this not become a “game” but to emphasize completion of the task, which often the student wants to relinquish before finishing because of the difficulty of the task. Expect the student to express frustration during the exercise. Encourage other students to give advice about how to perform the task. This may also frustrate the student, but it is the way real farmers with disabilities experience life.

On some simple tasks, you may want to divide the class into teams, each team having three or four members. The task becomes a relay, so the time involved to complete the task becomes of importance, much like real farming where “time is money.”

It is imperative that students be supervised and not placed in any situation where they might be injured while attempting the task. For this reason we do not recommend hammering, nailing, using cutting devices, or using heavy equipment (such as regular size tires). Be sure students are equipped with protective devices if needed for the task. Emphasize the task has been modified to decrease the risk of injury.

Allow adequate time for the student to complete the task, but tell him/her in advance how much time they have for completion. The time suggested should be the usual amount of time required to complete the task by an able-bodied person. For example, allow three minutes to complete a row of bolts and nuts. Knowing in advance how much time they have helps sets limits and allows more students to participate. Be prepared for the first student to fail in the task while later students succeed. This is part of experiential learning and how farmers with disabilities also learn: they watch others and learn what does and does not work, then they modify the task to fit their work style.

At the end of the physical simulation, allow time for the students to express how it felt to work under the conditions.

The following questions are good to pose:

- How long did you think it would take you to complete the task?
- What was the most frustrating part of the task?
- How could having this disability affect your farm work?
- What would you do differently in your farm work if you had this disability?